

Submitter: Ward Barker
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Special Committee On Referendum Petition
2026-302
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1599

If ever there was proof that Oregon was a Communist state, this is it: debating an unpopular measure such as more taxes, hearing input from citizens wherein 96% spoke out against the measure, then voting party line for it anyway. Then, when the citizens successfully mount a petition drive to repeal the measure and which will be on the next general election ballot, that same legislature determines to force the measure onto to an earlier election.

Legislatures are supposed to be representative of the people. However, we've watched over the years--since vote-by-mail assured the Democrats of perpetual majorities--as the Oregon legislature ignores its citizens and their input and does what it wants, in spite of the people.

A Willamette Weekly article published on 15.January 2026 referenced an Oregon attorney general opinion from 1935, in which it was determined "that once Oregonians invoke their constitutional right to referendum, the legislature has no authority to repeal the measure before voters have their say."

"The Oregon Constitution is unequivocal: the power of referendum is reserved to the people, and once a measure qualifies through signature verification, the Secretary of State has a clear, ministerial duty to place it before voters. There is no statutory or constitutional authority—none—for the Secretary of State to unilaterally remove a certified referendum from the ballot, even if the Legislature later repeals or amends the underlying law," said Representative Ed Diehl (R-Stayton), one of the chief petitioners on the successful referendum. "Any effort to repeal HB 3991 at this stage is nothing less than an attempt to silence the voices of hundreds of thousands of Oregonians who demanded their right to vote. Democrats cannot bypass the people simply because they dislike the prospect of voters rejecting their tax hike."

That would include moving the election date to get force YOUR decision on the people of Oregon.